

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
FOR
CONNECTICUT NRCS PERSONNEL**

- **Refer to the Stipulations in the State Level Agreement (SLA) concerning Cultural Resources**

1. NRCS personnel** responsible for planning a project or practice will determine whether a specific action is a “ground disturbing” or “potentially ground disturbing” undertaking (per attachment #3) early in the conservation planning process. The finding will be documented in the client case file on an Environmental Effects for Conservation Planning form (for NEPA compliance) –CPA-52. The client will be informed of our responsibility to identify and protect cultural resources.
2. A ***Practice Description Form For Cultural Review Resources*** (attachment #5) will be completed for ground-disturbing and potentially-ground-disturbing practices based on site evaluation. The presence of any cultural resources and an area of potential effect (APE) will be recorded. The form will be submitted to the assigned NRCS Cultural Resources Coordinator (CRC).
3. Planning personnel will check the ***Connecticut National Register of Historic Places*** for identification of potential historic buildings or sites, which might be effected by a project or practice. They will notify the CRC who will consult with the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and other appropriate individuals or agencies on identified places. The CRC will coordinate follow-up actions with the field planning personnel.
4. The CRC will review submitted ***Practice Description Forms***---with the OSA, and the SHPO as appropriate, to determine the need for further evaluation. If on staff, a Cultural Resource Specialist may conduct reviews with OSA and the SHPO. The CRC or CRS will respond to the planning personnel that either:
 - a. Planning and application of a conservation practice may proceed because it is likely that no cultural resources will be encountered with ground disturbance, or that
 - b. Site needs to be evaluated in the field by the State Archaeologist and/or a Cultural Resource Specialist (CRS) before proceeding, or that
 - c. A different location needs to be considered to avoid the area of potential effect (APE).

If a landowner disagrees with the NRCS determination that either additional evaluation is needed or a different location must be considered, NRCS has the option of withdrawing technical and financial assistance.

5. If required the CRC will arrange with the State Archaeologist and/or an NRCS CRS, or state approved archaeologist, to proceed with an investigation as NRCS funding allows.
6. If NRCS CRS services are not available the CRC will arrange for the following:
 - a. A site visit to obtain additional technical information and/or confirm the State Archaeologist and/or State Preservation Officer’s recommendation about the sensitivity or probability of the APE having significant cultural resources.

- b. The CRC will obtain a cost and time estimate for further investigation. The landowner may be asked if they are willing to pay for the investigation. If not, NRCS may withdraw technical assistance on this project/practice.
- 7. Assuming that a detailed archeological investigation can/will proceed the CRC and CRS will facilitate the field review and make sure that the findings are documented.
- 8. Based on the findings NRCS personnel will plan either to avoid the APE, or protect the cultural resource(s) with measures acceptable to the OSA and SHPO and the landowner.
- 9. **Discovery of Human Remains: STOP and refer to said SLA stipulation.**
- 9. Curation of any artifacts will be respectfully coordinated with the OSA, SHPO, and the landowner as stipulated in the SLA.

** NRCS personnel engaged in conservation planning activities will complete the NRCS National Cultural Resources Training Program to include presentations by the Connecticut State Archaeologist, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer, and tribal historic preservation officers or staff archaeologists as available.